

## Air Force maintains zero-tolerance policy

By Gen. Hal Hornburg  
Air Combat Command commander

Our people are my top priority. Everyone deserves to work in an environment where they are treated with dignity and respect. Tolerating sexual harassment fosters an environment that destroys unit cohesion and effectiveness. Worse, sexual assault exacts a terrible cost on victims, their families, our Air Force and our nation. The standard is clear: sexual harassment and assault are contrary to our core values and frustrate our ability to perform our mission.

Military service requires a high level of professional skill, a 24-hour-a-day commitment, and a willingness to give one's full measure of devotion. Common values, shared risks and subordination of self characterize our military culture, define us as Airmen and distinguish us from other organizations. Mission success depends on trust and understanding among unit members. Sexual assault incidents and sexual harassment erode that trust and unit cohesion.

Eliminating unprofessional and unlawful behaviors is a continuous process, one that demands vigilance and resolve at every level.

We all have a role to play. Supervisors must deal decisively with harassment issues to maintain standards of conduct. Each of us must make it a priority to educate ourselves on how to recognize and deal with inappropriate actions when they occur.

Resources available immediately include the Unit Climate Assessment program, Wing Climate Assessment Committees, Community Action

Information Boards/Integrated Delivery System and the Air Force Victim and Witness Assistance Program. Find out what these programs are about and spread the word.

The Air Force goal is to completely eliminate sexual harassment and assault and the climate that tolerates them. We are working to ensure an environment where victims have confidence to report without fear of reprisal or shame. We will investigate allegations wherever and whenever warranted. We will use all available tools of accountability, including criminal prosecution when appropriate. At the same time, we will address victims' health and well-being, both for the short and long term. Finally, the Air Force has charged commanders and higher headquarters to oversee program effectiveness. This is extremely important. I have commissioned a general officer-led team to travel to each ACC base with cross-functional experts to assess and report back to me on the climate throughout this command.

Drive, innovation and proactive leadership at all levels will prevent or stop unwanted behaviors before they become crimes.

Educate yourself, enforce standards of decency and conduct, and do not tolerate inappropriate behavior at any level.

We are Airmen 24-7. The nation looks to us as its ultimate defenders and we cannot succeed in that role without positive, motivating environments. It is essential we maintain the highest standards as we carry the fight to the enemy. We must not waiver in our determination to rid our command of all sexual assault and sexual harassment. Our people and our mission are too important to do anything less.

## Commander's Connection



Courtesy photo

Col. Sam Angelella (right) and Staff Sgt. John Schaub, 77th Aircraft Maintenance Unit avionics specialist and member of the Viper East F-16 Demo Team, greet each other at the annual Heritage Conference. During the conference, held recently at Davis-Monthan Air Force Base, Ariz., civilian and retired military members practiced with military pilots in preparation for 2004 air show performances.

"Commander's Connection" is a link between Col. Sam Angelella, 20th Fighter Wing commander, and the Shaw community. Questions or concerns that can't be resolved through normal channels can be called in and recorded at 895-4611 or e-mailed to **commandersconnection@shaw.af.mil**.

Callers should leave a name and telephone number in case questions need clarification. Comments of general interest may be published in **The Shaw Spirit**.



I am concerned about drivers who speed over the railroad tracks on Shaw Drive so they don't have to wait for the train to pass. What could we do to ensure drivers don't dart out in front of locomotives?



Thank you for your concern. Our Civil Engineer Squadron is pursuing funding for a future gate crossing. Fortunately, the accident risk is low by virtue of the slow speed of the train, vehicle speed limit and the line of sight. Our Safety office and unit commanders will continue to stress to all base members the dangers of crossing railroad tracks in front of an oncoming train.

## The Shaw Spirit

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## 'Safety First' message keeps member from drowning

**By Mr. Chuck Porter**  
20th Civil Engineer Squadron  
Resources flight chief

Putting into practice what's learned in safety briefings truly will save a life. I constantly remind 20th Civil Engineer Squadron members during our safety meetings and through e-mail of the importance to 'wear seat belts, don't drink and drive, watch out for the other drivers, wear sunscreen when in the sun and wear life jackets when on the water.' Now I am a living example of why it's vital to heed that advice.

It began after church Feb. 29, when a group of men stood around after the service talking about fishing. Someone in the group said he heard the crappie were biting in an area referred to as "the trees" at Lake Marion. This area used to be a forest, but now only the remains of some trees and stumps are left.

Being an avid fisherman and having the day off March 1, I planned a trip to try my luck at catching some of those crappies. I was up early Monday morning, and went down to my favorite spot to have a cup of coffee and talk to several friends gathered there. After that, I headed home to prepare the boat for my trip. Neither of my fishing partners could

go, so I set off alone.

After arriving at the lake, I prepared the boat for launch, put on my life jacket and set out. I headed directly for "the trees" and as I selected a spot I would like to try, I cut the motor off and let the boat drift toward a group of stumps.

I climbed up on the front pedestal seat, sat down and reached for my trolling motor. Suddenly, the right side of the boat hit a submerged stump, and I was instantly catapulted overboard.

Having never learned to swim, I flailed at the water trying to get myself back to the boat, only to realize I was not making any progress. So, I relaxed and let my life jacket hold me above water.

A while later, two fishermen, who were also deputies with the local sheriff's department, approached my boat. One of them extended a fishing cane. I grabbed it, and he pulled me back to the boat and helped me on board.

Life jackets are essential when on the water. You may say "I do not need a life jacket because I can swim." But what if you were in my situation and had hit your head on a submerged stump?

I thank God for saving me that day. He put those fishermen close by



Lake Marion

Courtesy photo

to hear my cries for help. They did not hesitate to respond, and I will always be grateful for their heroic act.

I also praise the Lord for keeping me safe and teaching me a valuable lesson; that He is in control.

Safety meetings are important -- so pay attention. Remember the content, and think safety all the time.

Wear your life jacket when on a boat, jet ski, etc. Do not take chances! I am a living testimony that life jackets save lives.

Below are some lessons to remember about life jackets and boating:

■ If you are wearing a life jacket and it feels completely comfortable,

you are probably not wearing it correctly. Make sure it is zipped up and all belts are fastened.

■ Inspect the jacket. If you find holes, you probably need to replace it. You could be ticketed by a park officer if he or she finds the jacket you are wearing is unserviceable.

■ Wear a life jacket at all times while in a boat.

■ Make sure the jacket you are wearing is designed to support your weight.

■ Finally, I've learned, even though you may be careful about wearing a life jacket, remember to remain alert and safely secured inside the boat at all times in case it jerks abruptly.

## SAINT PATRICK'S DAY

The man who became known as St. Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, was born in Wales around AD 385.

Much Irish folklore surrounds St. Patrick's Day, but not much of it is substantiated. One traditional icon of the day is the shamrock, which stems from a more bonafide tale that tells how St. Patrick used the three-leafed shamrock to explain the Christian concept of the Trinity. He used it in his sermons to represent how God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit could all exist as separate elements of the same entity. His followers adopted the custom of wearing a shamrock on his feast day.

Americans began celebrating St. Patrick's Day in 1737.



## March is Women's History Month

# What woman influences you most?



"My mom. She raised three kids while my father, a military man, was in World War II and Korea." -- Ms. Nancy Geiter, military spouse



"Harriet Tubman. She had the courage to put her life on the line for others." -- Senior Airman Carlton Wright, 20th Mission Support Squadron



"My mother. She saw the good in others and said everything would work out if you did the right thing." -- Ms. Joyce Cartrett, 20th Services Squadron



"My wife. She is my role model of what an NCO should be. She's my inspiration, my mentor." -- Staff Sgt. Les VanBelkum, 9th Air Force Information Warfare flight

Photos by Airman 1st Class Susan Penning